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United States Patent [19]

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Whitehouse

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[54] **SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PURCHASE AND APPLICATION OF POSTAGE USING PERSONAL COMPUTER**

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[51] Int. Cl.⁵ **G07B 17/00**

[52] U.S. Cl. **364/464.03; 364/464.02**

[58] Field of Search **364/464.02, 464.03**

[56] **References Cited**

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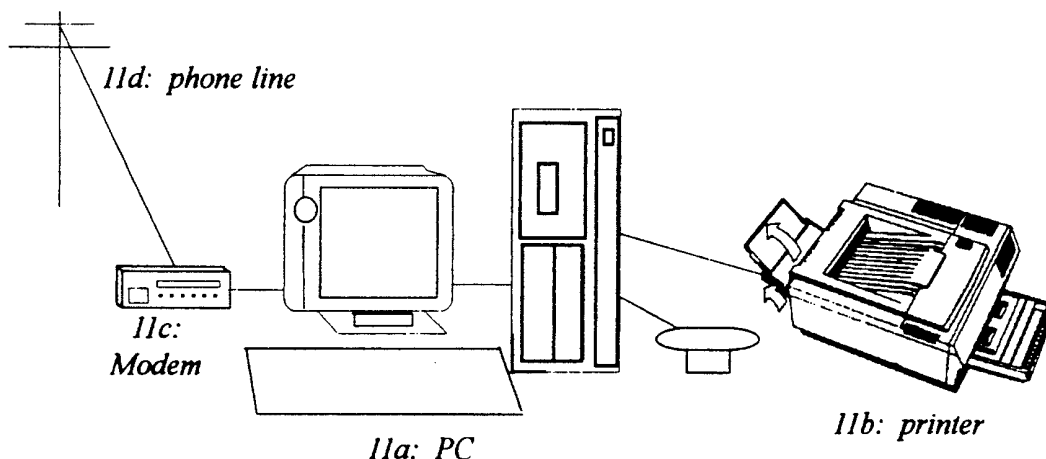
Primary Examiner—Edward R. Cosimano
Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Flehr, Hohbach, Test, Albritton & Herbert

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A distributed computer system enables end-users hav-

ing personal computers to purchase postage from the post authority. End-user computers each include a modem for communicating with a computer at the postal authority, a secure non-volatile memory for storing postal usage and remaining postage information, a postage meter control program that includes a program for communicating with the postal authority to purchase postage and for updating the contents of the secure non-volatile memory. The end user computers preferably include a printer and a postage printing program for directing the printer to print addresses and postage on envelopes and labels. The postage printing program assigns a unique serial number to every printed envelope and label, where the unique serial number includes a meter identifier unique to that end user. As a result, every printed envelope and label contains a unique serial number. The postage printing program also directly controls the printer so as to prevent end users from printing more than one copy of any envelope or label with the same serial number. By capturing and storing the serial numbers on all mail pieces, and then periodically processing that information, the postal service can detect fraudulent duplication of envelopes or labels. The postage meter control program in each end user computer also allows the postal service to collect from the secure non-volatile memory audit information concerning postage purchased and postage applied to mail pieces by the end user's computer.

6 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



RPX Exhibit 1014

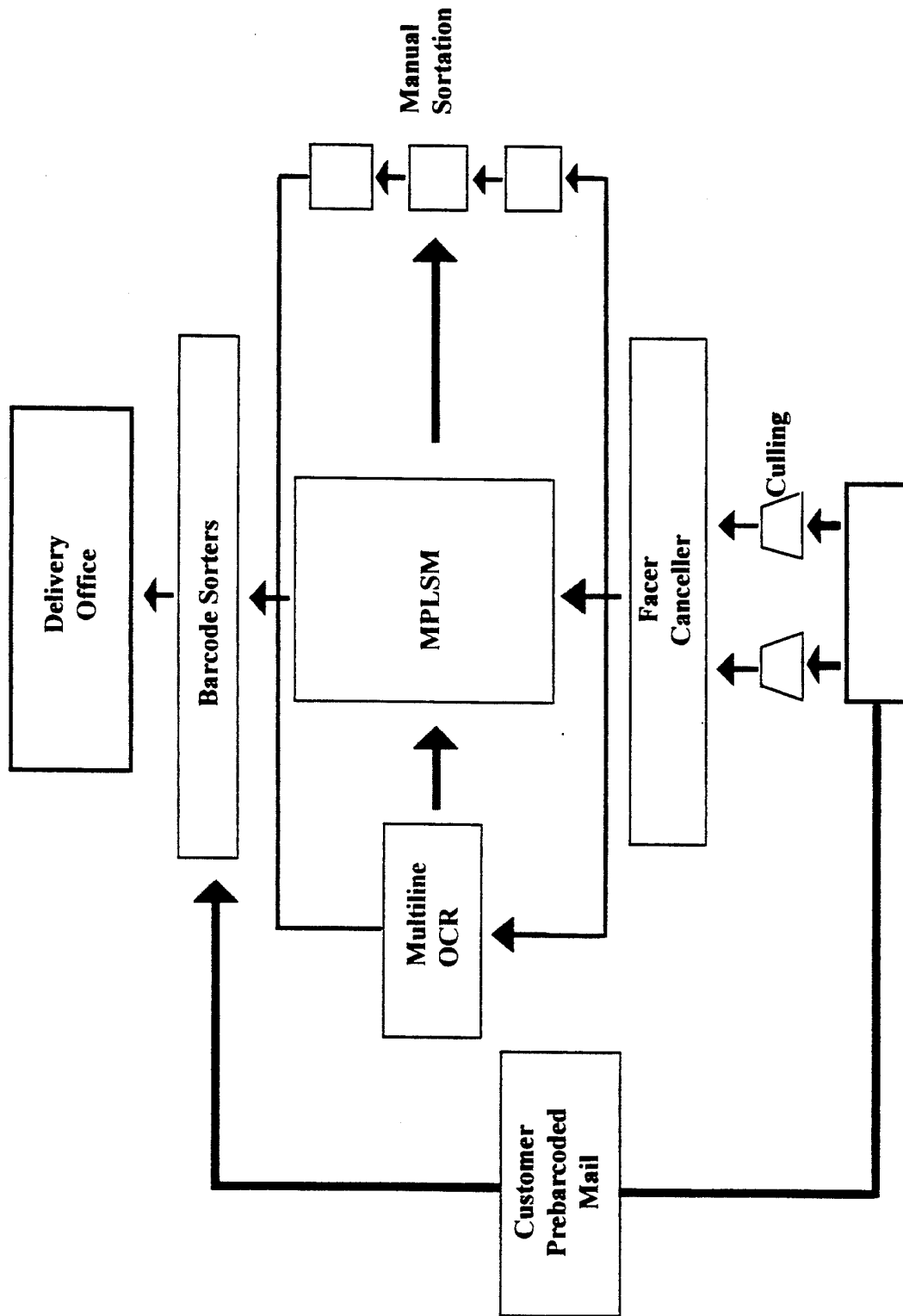
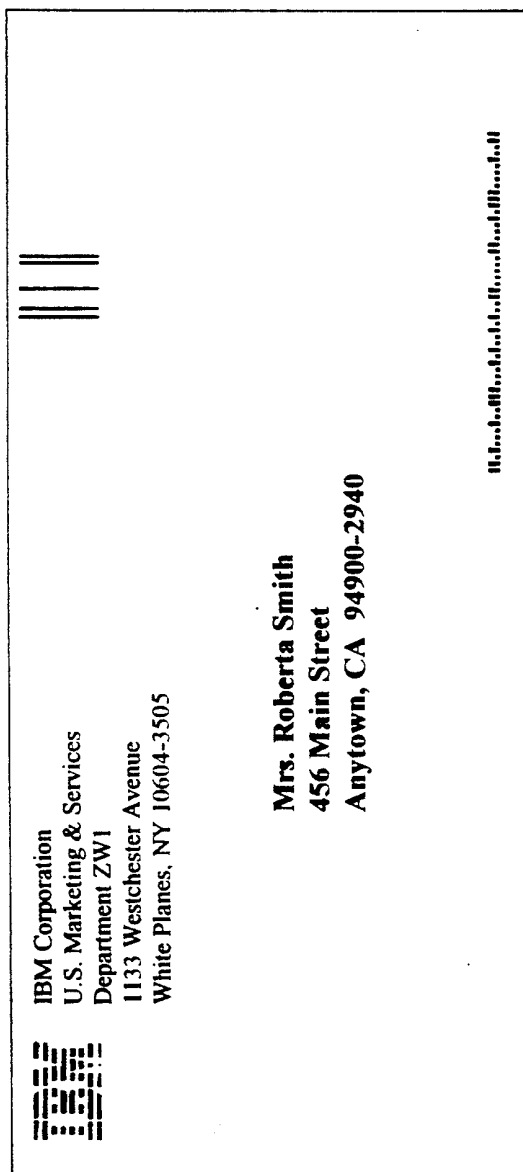


Figure 1



PLACE
FIRST
CLASS
POSTAGE
HERE

Fig 3a

First-Class
Postage
Required
Post Office will
not deliver
without proper
postage.

Fig 3b

First-Class
POSTNET
Personal
Automation
Discount
27 Cents
for 1st Ounce

Fig 3c



Penalty for Private
Use to Avoid Payment
of Postage, \$300

Fig 3d

FIRST-CLASS
MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #99999
PALO ALTO, CA

Fig 3e

Non Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #9999
Palo Alto, CA

Fig 3f

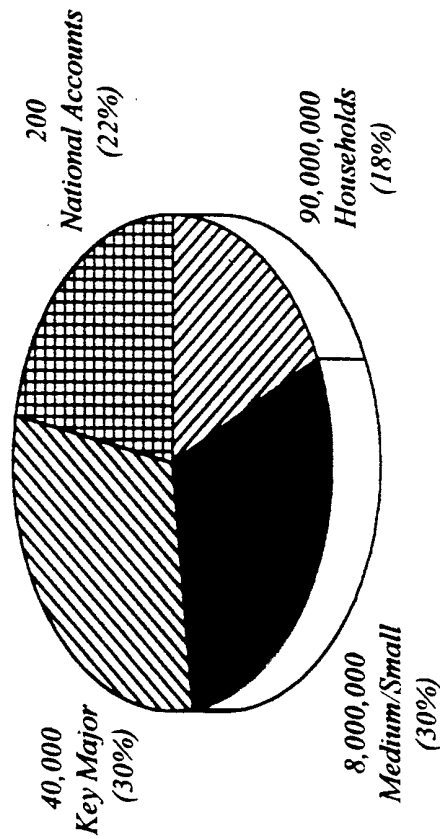


Figure 4

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